

## 2022-09-11, Start of the Service:

A Minute of Silence and a Prayer for the  
Remembrance of 9/11/2001 and Those Who Lost  
Their Lives on that Fateful Day

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O God of all the nations,  
we gather on this day of remembrance confessing  
that as your children, the events of twenty-one  
years ago now...

have not made us much wiser  
or enhanced our willingness to love one another  
without condition.

Walls still divide, fear still separates, and strangers  
seem stranger than ever.

Patient and loving God, look with mercy on your  
children gathered here today.

[*ex temp* concluding prayer for first responders, then  
AND now...]

Nudge us along the narrow way of Jesus,  
that we might be healed and become healers and  
helpers and leaven on this good earth you have  
given us to steward.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Other than the *ex temp* addition, this prayer is by Rev. Dr.  
Ronald M Patterson, Bridge Minister for Plymouth UCC in Ft.  
Collins CO.

## Of Prophets & Kings: Post-Exile (Part 2) “The Lingerin Call to Faithfulness”

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden for FUMC  
Grand Junction, Pentecost Sunday, September 11, 2022

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ

website: <https://www.fumcgj.org>;

scroll down to the Church Online panel and

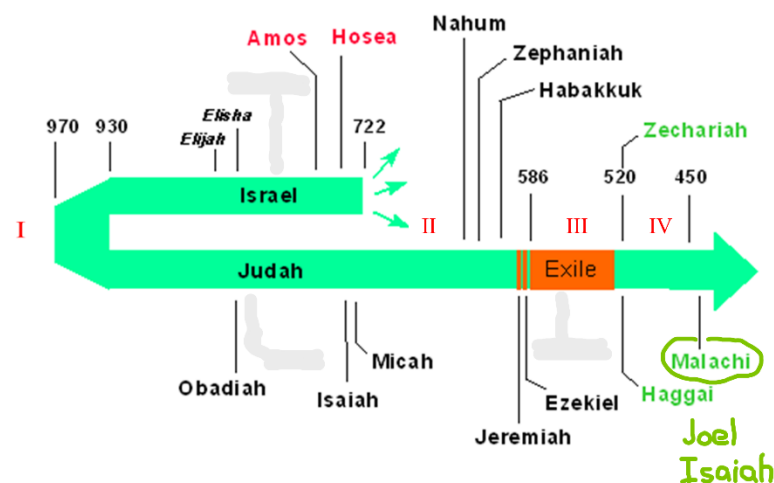
click the Digital Worship Archive button

Scripture Text: Joel 2:1-2a; Malachi 3:8-10;  
Joel 2:12-14; and Isaiah 61:1-2a [NRSV]

### OPENING

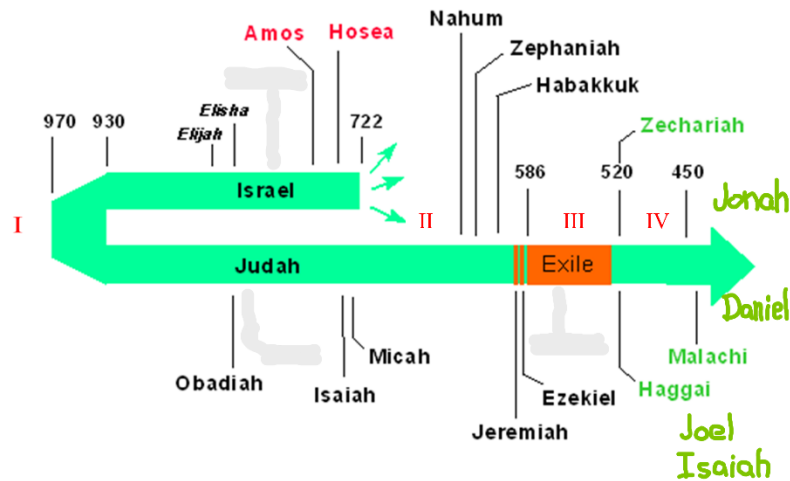
- Slide #1 – Review of where we’ve been and where we are today.

Figure 1: Chronology of the Writing Prophets



- Slide #2 – How we’ll finish it all up next week with a consideration of Jonah and Daniel.

Figure 1: Chronology of the Writing Prophets

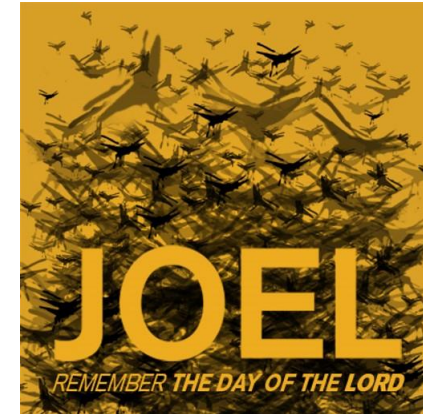


## SERMON THOUGHTS

- (\*The anti-climactic ending to the series that results from the prophets’ lingering call to faithfulness.\*)  
I wanted to end on a positive, upbeat, hope-filled, “they repented!” kind of note. But that’s not how the Biblical story ends.
- Why was the Prophets’ lingering call necessary?  
Because the people still seemed to be straying from the ways of God.

## TO THE SCRIPTURES

- Theme of Joel: the coming Day of the LORD. Judgement through an unbelievable swarm of locusts.



- Malachi = “My messenger”  
*<sup>3:1</sup> See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?*

- Theme of Malachi, God's Pleadings:  
Repent...change your ways while there is still time,  
before "the great and terrible Day of the LORD"—  
tying in closely with the theme of Joel.



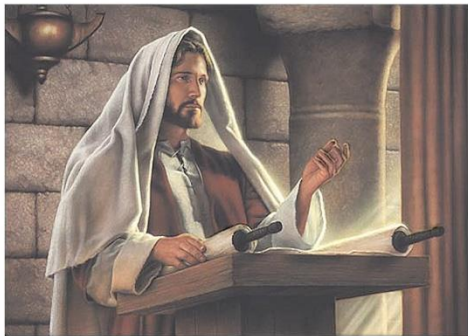
Malachi

### Malachi's Message



Repent: Turn around

- "Latter" Isaiah (Ch. 61) and Jesus' reference in Luke 4 to this passage and the inauguration of His ministry.



**The Spirit of  
the LORD is  
upon Me...**

- Jesus' embodiment of the vision from Isaiah, very consistent with Isaiah's vision of hope for the coming Kingdom of God. No wonder Jesus referenced Isaiah so much in His teaching and ministry.

**The Spirit of  
the LORD is  
upon Me...**



## CONCLUSION

The last words of the Old Testament reinforce the Prophets' lingering call to faithfulness:

*<sup>4:5</sup> Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.*

Jesus taught that this Elijah was John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14), and so the story continues in "Act II".

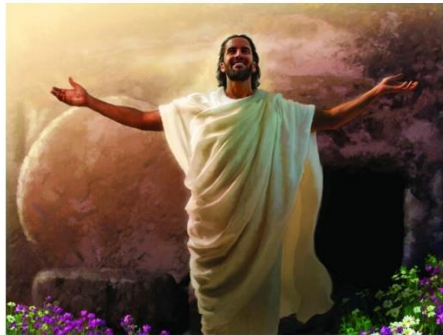
And the words of "Father Abraham" to the suffering sinner in Hades in Luke (16:19-31) who was pleading to Abraham to send the poor beggar Lazarus to warn his brothers of judgment with the words of the Prophets strike an ominous tone for us:

*“If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets,  
neither will they be convinced even if someone rises  
from the dead.”*

For the first time in my reading of the Bible – and only because I’ve spent so much time this summer in these books of the Prophets – I see that God’s last resort was to take on human flesh and dwell among us:

- Immanuel, God with us.
- Jesus, the Word made flesh, the fullness of God in a human life.
- The fullest – and last and lasting – revelation of God to humanity.

If not an upbeat and positive ending to the story *Of Prophets and Kings*, it’s at least clear. We can be under no delusions: We have the ultimate message from the ultimate Messenger –



He who rose from the dead, giving God the last word in this whole matter of faithfulness.

The question is, “Is Father Abraham right?” Are we still unconvinced? Let us pray...